



SOCIETY OF ACTUARIES

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Six Signs of Being a Boor

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As an etiquette professional, I enjoy reading reports written by other specialists on the topic of workplace behaviors. While there are volumes written about civility in the workplace, in 2009, author Anthony Balderrama of CareerBuilder.com wrote a powerful little article pinpointing six attributes that simply shout, “Boor!” Here’s my take on his six attributes. See if you agree that—“It doesn’t take a brainiac to know that...

- **Not cleaning up after yourself in a community kitchen is rude.** Does your employer offer a space with a refrigerator, sink, microwave oven and table for staff to congregate for meals or snacks? Why would you abuse the privilege by not cleaning up after yourself if you’ve got dirty cups, plates and silverware? Wash your personal items and don’t leave a pile of dirty Tupperware containers in the sink. Wipe down the table when you have finished dining. Why wouldn’t a person do this? Oh, that’s right, because she is rude.
- **“Colorful language” in the workplace is rude.** Yes, we’ve all become far more relaxed in expressing ourselves. The word “sucks” dominates the lexicon as well as a slew of other words that have elbowed their way into everyday jargon. Nevertheless, what needs to be remembered is that it’s less about the profanity itself than the fact that you really don’t care if you are offending anyone. Being sensitive to the sensibilities of the people around you is a sign of courtesy and finesse.
- **“Cell Yell” is rude.** Cubicles are the norm in many workplaces, so one person’s speakerphone or “smart phone” conversation becomes an entire floor’s business. Never mind how annoying it is to hear a conversation you’re not a part of; think how bothersome it is to try to concentrate on work when someone’s blathering in your ears. Rather than force your call on the whole department, invest in a headset or speak more quietly. Honestly, do you WANT your co-workers to know when you’re having a tiff with your spouse or what the doctor thinks about your toenail fungus?
- **Not greeting people is rude.** When you’re walking down the hall and a co-worker is walking toward you, give a smile, a nod or some other greeting. No one is asking you to pretend you are best friends. All anyone wants is an acknowledgement that you see them and that you’re not going out of your way to avoid having any contact with them. To do otherwise is rude. ●

- **Interrupting people is rude.** When you interrupt someone, you suggest that your time and ideas are more important than anyone else’s and that you have no interest in listening to what they have to say. Finishing someone else’s sentences, waving people off, talking over them or not permitting another party the luxury of *thinking* of a response is a sign that you are a bonehead.
- **Neglecting to say “thank you” is rude.** In a 2002 Public Agenda survey, researchers learned that less than half of adults (only 48 percent) expressed gratitude when a kindness had been done to them. Sixteen percent of respondents said they practically never saw demonstrations of appreciation. What happened to a simple ritual of thanking someone for bagging your groceries, delivering your coffee, scrubbing down the company restroom or holding a door? Even small children know to say “thank you” when a lollipop is offered.



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